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STATE FOR DRL A/S KRAMER

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SUBJECT: MEXICO OUTREACH WITH ACTIVISTS FOR DEMOCRACY AND
DISSIDENTS

REF: STATE 44903

11. (SBU) Poloff met with Eduardo Matias Lopez Ferrer, President of the Cuban-Mexican Civic Association in Mexico, and his wife on June 27, to express support for his organization in response reftel request to meet with dissidents from un-free nations who are living in exile in Mexico.

12. (SBU) The Mexican press recently reported Matias public criticism of Mexico's handling of Cuban immigrants. He asserted that a qualitative change in policy occurred beginning in April 2005 when Mexico began deporting some Cubans back to Cuba. (Comment: While Mexico seeks to repatriate all undocumented Cubans it detains, Cuba refuses to repatriate those who arrived via a third country and overall accepts very few. The two countries are negotiating a migration agreement but it is not clear whether they will be able to reconcile the divide over repatriation in time for signature of the document when the Cuban FM visits Mexico. End Comment.) Matias questioned why Mexico does not regard these migrants as assets contributing to the country's development and blamed the problems most Cubans face on corruption within the Mexican National Institute for Migration (INM). He claimed that wealthier Cubans (who can bribe officials) are given preferential treatment by corrupt Mexican immigration officers. He believed that INM officials had facilitated the recent "hijacking" of a bus with 33 undocumented Cubans, rejecting the notion that this operation was carried out by Cuban-American smugglers as widely reported by media.

13. (SBU) During the meeting with Poloff, Matias also opined that Raul Castro was going to be even more repressive than Fidel, pointing to his recent handling of student protests. He thought that Raul, who is more business oriented, would follow the Chinese model of "external capitalism and internal communism." When asked about the U.S. trade embargo with Cuba, Matias maintained that it was, in practice, not effective in preventing goods from reaching Cuba. He said that his organization is currently involved in an effort to get Cuba to use a single currency. He explained that workers in Cuba are being paid in the national currency but that the majority of food and other essential supplies can only be purchased with "convertible" currency.

14. (U) Post will continue its outreach to dissidents from un-free nations who are living in exile in Mexico and report as appropriate.

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GARZA